

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926

CONTACT:
ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS OFFICE
PHONE: (602)-542-8019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Scam Alert - Office Supply Company Telemarketing and Deceptive Invoices

(Phoenix, Ariz. – July 14, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard is warning Arizona businesses to watch out for delivery of, or invoices for, office supplies that were never ordered.

In one of these office supply scams -- a telemarketing representative of a supply company contacts purchasing departments to inform them that a shipment is ready for delivery. Then the business employee, unaware that the supplies were never ordered or requested in the first place, approves the shipment. When the supplies are delivered, they are accompanied with an overpriced bill. Businesses are also being billed for supplies that were never shipped. In either case, if the business owner refuses to pay, the supplier will subsequently harass them for payment.

"These scams take advantage of larger organizations that order supplies on a regular basis," Goddard said.

Companies should also be on the lookout for a related scam that involves correspondence that appears to be an invoice but is nothing more than an offer for sale. Because these offers look so much like invoices, unsuspecting employees may send a payment.

Fraudulent suppliers try to trap businesses into buying products they may not need at inflated prices. Business owners and employees should do the following when contacted by suppliers:

- Ask for a purchase order number and verify its authenticity before approving any shipment.
- When receiving mail that appears to be an invoice, verify that it is one.
- Sometimes there will be very fine print stating "***This is not an invoice.***"
- Never give credit card or bank account information over the phone to a telemarketing supplier.

Please contact the Attorney General's Office with questions or concerns. If you know someone who has been the victim of fraud, call:

Phoenix Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Information and Complaints
1275 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2926
Telephone: (602) 542-5763
outside Phoenix 1-800-352-8431

Tucson Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Information and Complaints
400 W. Congress - South Building, Suite 315
Tucson, Arizona 85701-1367
Telephone: (520) 628-6504
or 1-800-352-8431

Consumers can also visit the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov for further information or to complete a consumer complaint form online.

###